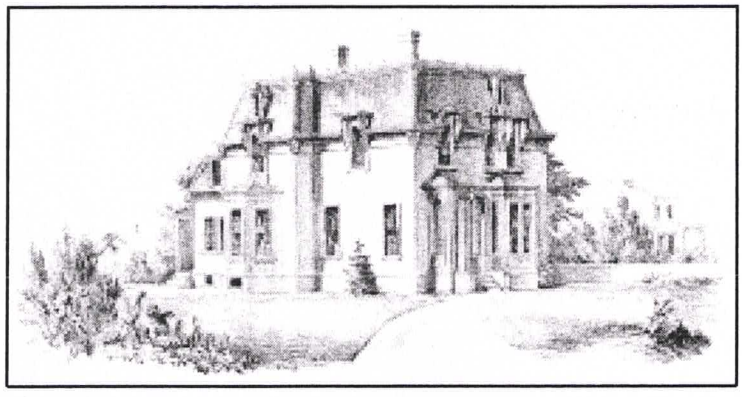
EXHIBIT A

LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT



John and Clara Merchant House

3854 North Kostner Avenue

Preliminary Landmark recommendation approved by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks, February 7, 2008

CITY OF CHICAGO
Richard M. Daley, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development
Arnold L. Randall, Commissioner

The Commission on Chicago Landmarks, whose nine members are appointed by the Mayor and City Council, was established in 1968 by city ordinance. The Commission is responsible for recommending to the City Council which individual buildings, sites, objects, or districts should be designated as Chicago Landmarks, which protects them by law.

The landmark designation process begins with a staff study and a preliminary summary of information related to the potential designation criteria. The next step is a preliminary vote by the landmarks commission as to whether the proposed landmark is worthy of consideration. This vote not only initiates the formal designation process, but it places the review of city permits for the property under the jurisdiction of the Commission until a final landmark recommendation is acted on by the City Council.

This Landmark Designation Report is subject to possible revision and amendment during the designation process. Only language contained within the designation ordinance adopted by the City Council should be regarded as final.

***Cover*: The John and Clara Merchant House (left) at 3854 N. Kostner Ave. in the Irving Park neighborhood. The house was modeled after an 1869 design featured in *Woodward's National Architect* (right). The house is an exceptional example of 19th-century mail-order pattern-book architecture, a design and distribution method popularly used in suburban development. (Photo by Susan Perry, CCL)**

JOHN AND CLARA MERCHANT HOUSE

3854 NORTH KOSTNER AVE.

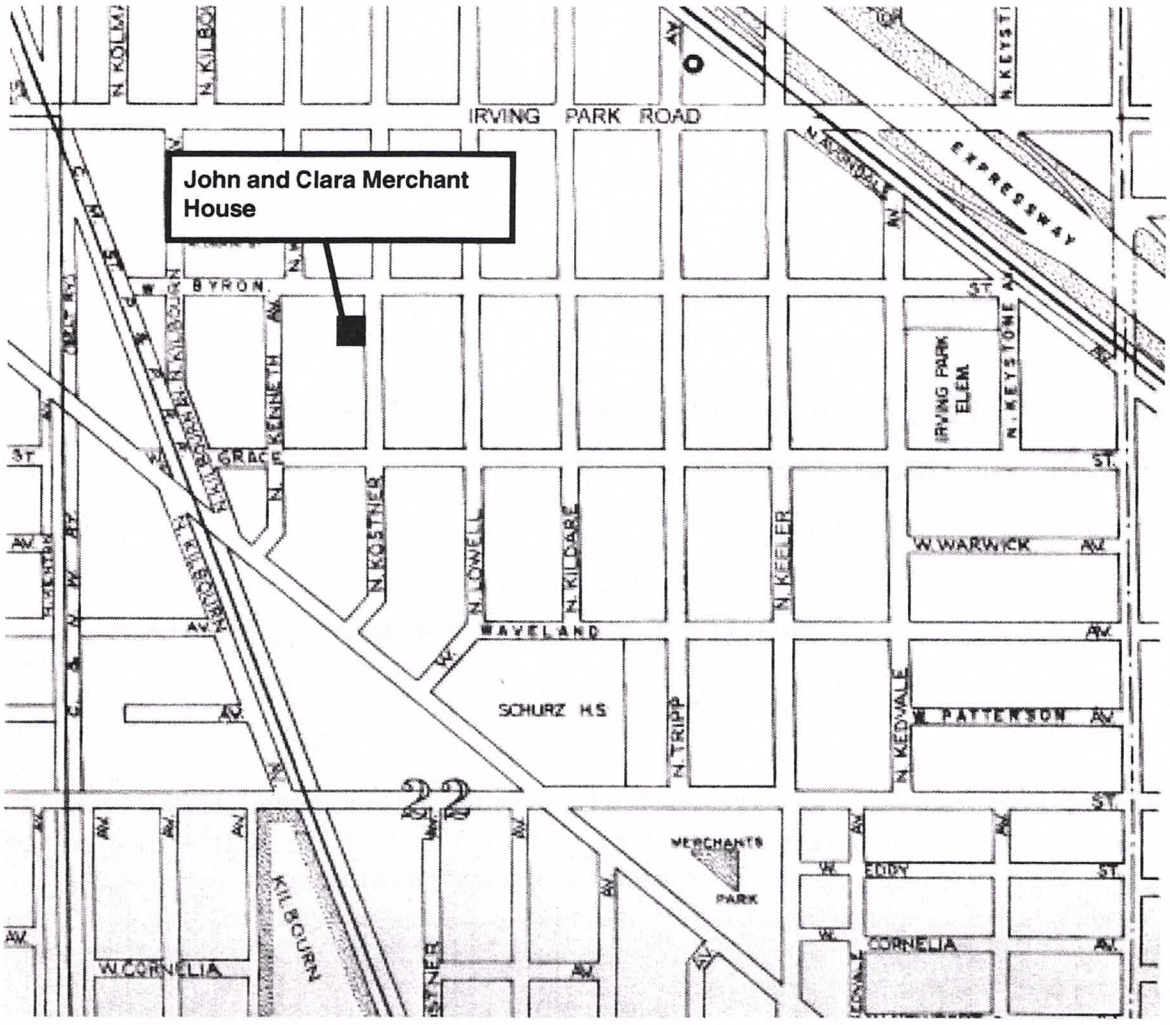
BUILT: c. 1872

ARCHITECT: GEORGE E. WOODWARD
(WOODWARD'S NATIONAL ARCHITECT, DESIGN # 2)

In the mid-19th century, the neighborhood of Irving Park, located on Chicago's northwest side, was a series of small "railroad suburbs" clustered around two rail lines that provided passenger service to the area. The communities grew as real estate developers promoted the area's large lots, its distance from the city's congestion and pollution, and its excellent transportation. After the Chicago Fire of 1871, Irving Park gained greater recognition for maintaining its "suburban-ness" as people rushed to replace property lost in the fire.

With the city's urgent need to rebuild—and the rapid outward growth into the suburbs—it seemed virtually impossible for a finite number of architects to produce such a variety of designs for each individual client. By its very nature, the architect-client relationship was too intimate to successfully keep up with the demand. House plans via mail-order or "pattern book architecture" was a method devised to multiply the effectiveness of the architect, plus educate the home buyer in the basics of architectural design and taste. As a pattern-book house, the John and Clara Merchant House exemplifies this important housing design phenomenon.

The John and Clara Merchant House, built ca. 1872 from a pattern in *Woodward's National Architect* (1869), is a handsome Second Empire-style building near the corner of Kostner and Byron avenues. Its large mansard roof and carved flat-lintel window hoods exemplifies the style and visual character of the large single-family homes that dotted the Grayland settlement in the 1860s and 70s.



The John and Clara Merchant House at 3854 N. Kostner Ave. is located in the Irving Park neighborhood on Chicago's Northwest Side.

The house has excellent physical integrity, and exemplifies the type of residential architecture designs produced through the mail-order pattern book method. It also represents an early stage of Irving Park's development as a railroad suburb.

"Railroad Suburbs" and the Development of Irving Park

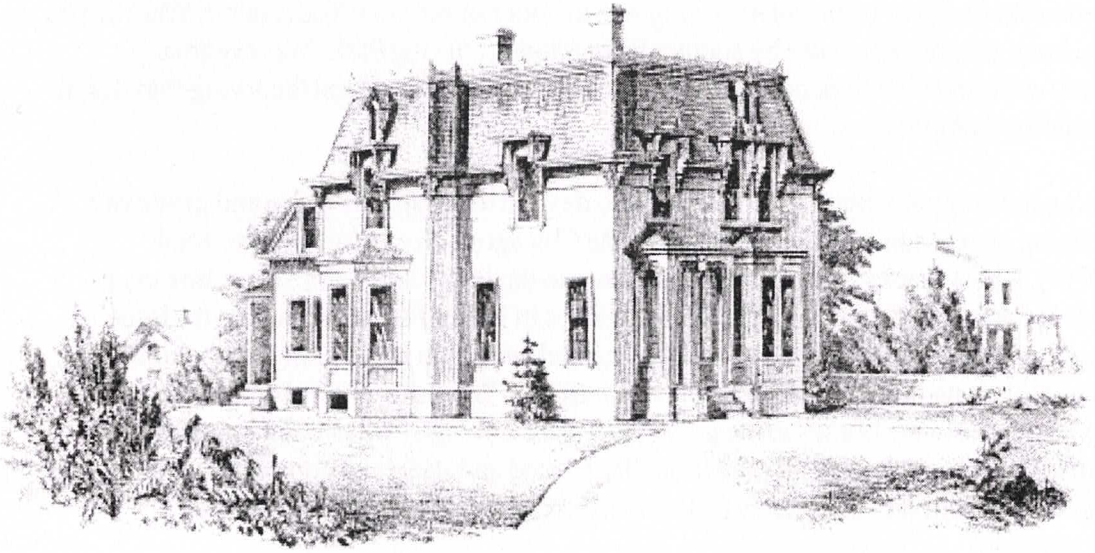
Irving Park is a classic example of the "railroad suburb"—a community that developed and prospered during the late-19th century based on access to railroad lines. During the last four decades of the 19th century, rail service had a strong influence on the patterns of urban settlement, as real estate speculators began to plan outlying communities around commuter railroads. Developers sold large lots for the construction of single-family houses, and often sold land at discounts to civic and religious institutions that would build in the area and help attract middle-class families to these new railroad suburbs.

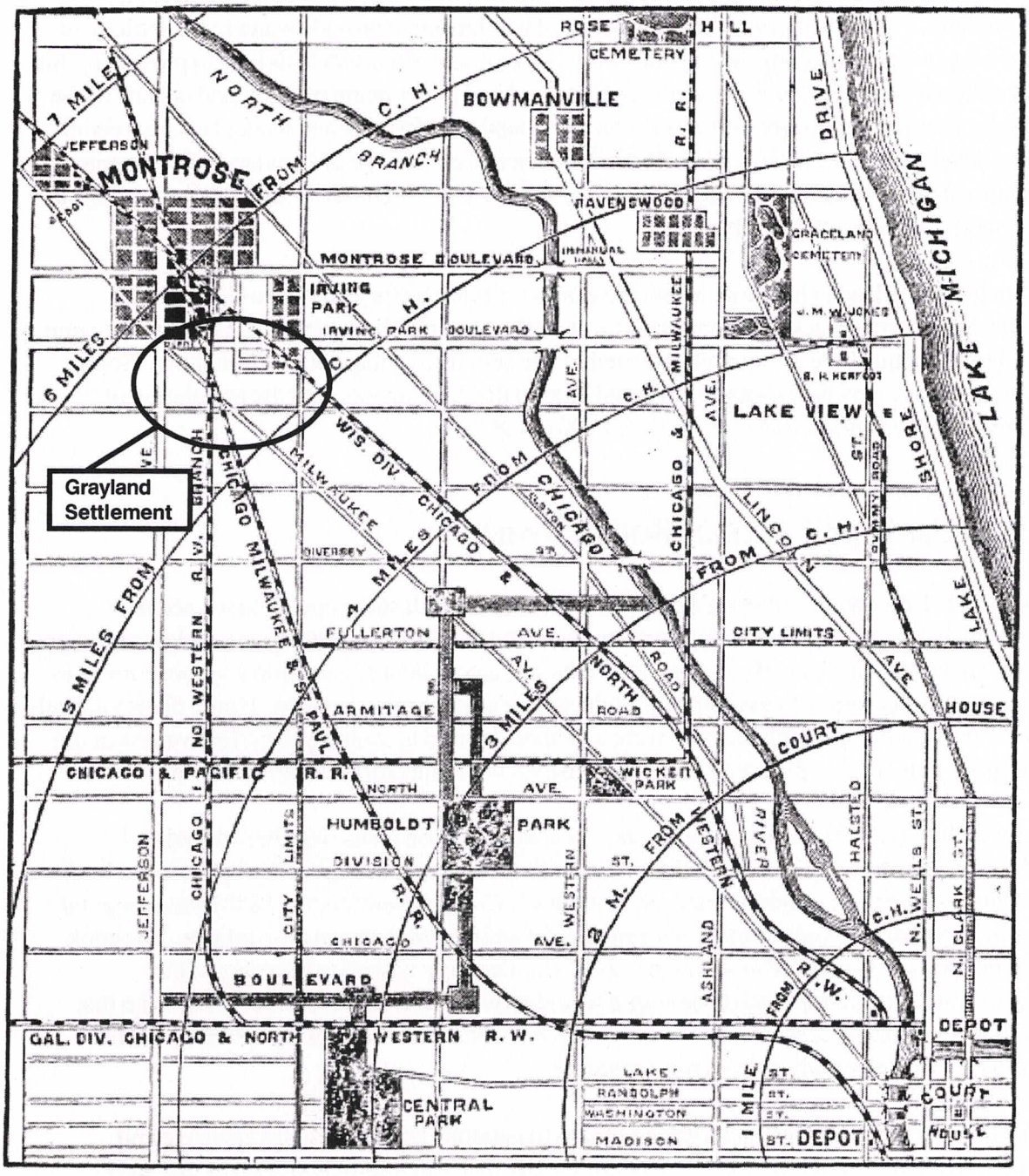
The present-day Irving Park neighborhood grew from a consolidation of three early suburban settlements within Jefferson Township: Irving Park, Grayland and Montrose (later called Mayfair). Comprised of a total of 15 small settlements, the township was officially formed in 1850, despite the fact that most of its 700 citizens had settled in the area in the 1830s. Jefferson's town hall was built in 1857 on land donated by John Gray, a farmer and businessman who was elected Cook County Sheriff shortly after the town hall was completed.

In 1869, New York businessman Charles T. Race purchased 160 acres from Major Noble, whose father bought land in the area in 1833. Race's intent was to become a gentleman farmer, but decided it would be more profitable to develop a settlement on the land. That same year his son, Richard T. Race, purchased an adjacent parcel of 80 acres from John Gray, assisting his father in this new business venture. Charles Race also took on additional family members and investors, each bringing with them additional acreage. The new settlement was to have been called "Irvington" in honor of the New York author, Washington Irving, but it was already in use by another Illinois town. "Irving Park" was eventually decided upon, and with their combined land resources, they organized the Irving Park Land and Building Company.

Early on, the company marketed to those who desired to escape the noise and grime of a burgeoning population in Chicago. Initially, the Chicago & North Western Railroad (C&NW), whose tracks were in close proximity to the land, didn't stop there; however, Charles Race persuaded the railroad to make stops in Irving Park in exchange for Race paying to have the depot built. The railroad agreed, and soon houses sprang up around the depot, establishing the first railroad suburb in Jefferson Township. Shortly thereafter, the desperate need of new homes in the aftermath of the Chicago Fire of 1871 spurred rapid growth to the area. Subsequently the Irving Park Land and Building Company routinely mentioned the railroad's frequency to the area, or printed train timetables in their advertisements.

A current view (above) of the John and Clara Merchant House, built ca. 1872. The house was produced from architectural drawings available through mail-order pattern books, as seen in the rendering below. Its Second Empire design demonstrates the architectural style that was popular at the time.





Above: An 1874 map of the Irving Park and Montrose railroad suburbs in Jefferson Township. The Grayland settlement (indicated), organized in 1873, was not yet platted but located south of Irving Park Blvd. with a depot along the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad.

The settlement of Grayland adjoined Irving Park on the southwest and located along the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad (CM&St.P). In 1869, John Gray built an Italianate-style house located at 4362 W. Grace, and in 1873 subdivided his land and christened it "Grayland." Shortly afterward, an artesian well was tapped to provide water to his settlement, and a depot was built along the rail line. John Gray initially subdivided his land to provide for his six children and their families, but the high demand and prices being paid for land outside of the city limits were hard to ignore. Gray eventually abandoned farming and worked exclusively in land development until his death in 1889. It was at this early stage of Grayland's development as a railroad suburb that the Merchant House was built, with its inhabitants taking full advantage of the short commute into the city.

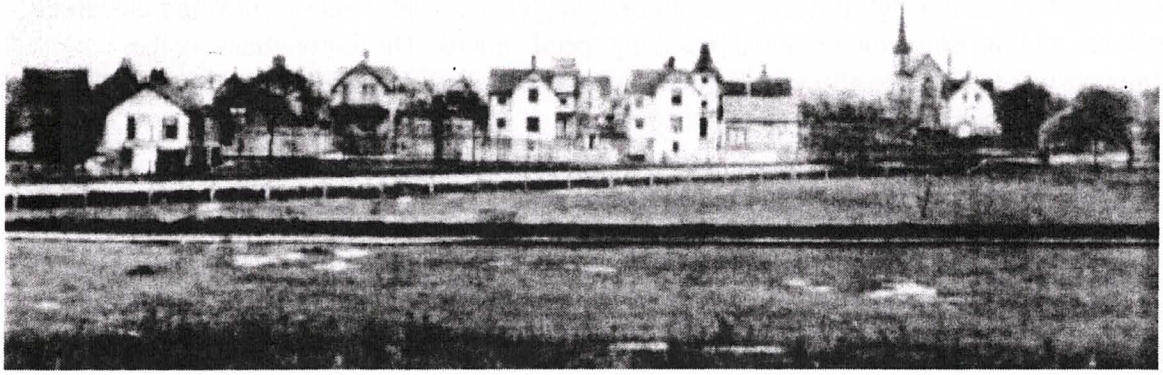
Like Irving Park and Grayland, Montrose shares a similar history. With the C&NW and CM&St.P railroad tracks criss-crossing through the center of the settlement, Montrose became the largest of the three settlements, spurred by the added advantage of two train lines. Soon there were as many as 60 houses clustered around the three depots, and the population of Jefferson Township in 1880 swelled from 700 to 4,876.

19th-Century Pattern Book Homes

In the late-19th century, America's cities and towns grew with such rapidity that it seemed virtually impossible for the limited number of architects at the time to produce a variety of designs for each individual client. By its very nature, the architect-client relationship was too intimate to successfully keep up with the demands of the nation's burgeoning suburbs. House plans via mail-order or "pattern book architecture" were a method devised to multiply the effectiveness of the architect, plus educate the home buyer in the basics of architectural design and taste.

Prior to the Civil War, the first of the "mass-produced" house plans were introduced and advertised through a type of book that was loosely similar to the architectural pattern books of the late 19th century. Andrew Jackson Downing's *Cottage Residences* (1842) was a popular publication that inspired its reader with an array of architectural design possibilities. The book was not primarily intended to sell plans, but if a homeowner wished to have any of the architectural designs replicated, the author would provide his architectural services. With this method, Downing generated a few building commissions from the book's popularity, but his profits were chiefly derived from book royalties.

Shortly after the war, plan books were a means to generate home sales. Inexpensive and produced on inferior paper, they were nothing more than catalogs of house plans that were available for purchase. Since the money generated from these books were produced from house plan sales rather than book sales, the books were often discarded shortly after the building was completed. In the book *Architecture: Designs for Street Fronts, Suburban Houses, and Cottages* (1865), architects Marcus F. Cummings and Charles C. Miller went back to the earlier format of architectural pattern books, but focused almost entirely on architectural detailing and millwork, rather than providing complete house designs.



Top: A historic photo of the Irving Park settlement in what was then Jefferson Township. This early-1880s view looks south along Irving Park Blvd. The Chicago & North Western Railroad tracks are in the foreground.

Right: An advertisement for the Irving Park Land and Building Company, 1874. Charles T. Race founded the Irving Park settlement in 1869 and persuaded the C & NW Railroad to make stops there in exchange for providing payment for the train depot. His advertisements often contained timetables or mentioned the frequency of trains to the area.

Bottom: A portrait of John Gray, former Cook County Sheriff and founder of the Grayland settlement where the Merchant House was built.

THE ORIGINAL

IRVING PARK

Land and Building Company.

HOUSES for Sale on Long Time and Built to Order on Terms to Suit.

Money to Loan for Building Purposes.

AT IRVING PARK.

A Desirable Residence Place,

With Water Works in complete working order, and connected with every Dwelling Sold by us

SHADY STREETS, FINE SCHOOLS, CHURCHES AND STORES.

Only Six Miles from center of Chicago, reached by Railroad in twenty minutes, commutation fare seven cents.

TRAINS TO AND FROM CHICAGO NEARLY EVERY HOUR IN THE DAY.

C. T. RACE, Irving Park,
R. T. RACE, " "
S. A. RACE, New York. } Proprietors.

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REAL ESTATE, LOAN AND NOTE

BROKERS,

167 *Madison Street, Room* 1, CHICAGO, ILL.

One of the most prolific writers who established himself in the pattern-book tradition after the war was New York architect **George E. Woodward** (1829-1905). Unlike his contemporaries, Woodward produced high-priced publications, complete with presentation drawings, elevations, sections, and carpentry, masonry and plumbing specifications. The thoroughness of the drawings was intended to allow the homeowner to become his own general contractor, while protecting him against shoddy workmanship.

Over a short period of time, Woodward published numerous architectural pattern books and serials on virtually any building type: *Woodward's Country Homes* (1865), *Woodward's Graperies and Horticultural Buildings* (1865), *Woodward's Cottages and Farm Houses* (1867), *Architecture, Landscape Gardening and Rural Art* (1867-68), *Woodward's National Architect* (1869), and *Woodward's Suburban and Country Homes* (1873). The John and Clara Merchant House, located at 3854 N. Kostner Ave., is Design No. 2 in *Woodward's National Architect*.

Another successful publisher of pattern-book architecture was George Palliser (1849- 1903). An English immigrant who arrived in Newark, New Jersey, in 1868, Palliser worked as a master carpenter and became a co-owner of a millwork company. In 1873, he moved to Bridgeport, Connecticut, where he formed a company commissioned to build speculative housing by the town's mayor, and future circus entrepreneur, P. T. Barnum.

The publication of inexpensive pattern books was the key to Palliser's success. In 1876, he published a booklet called *Model Homes for the People, a Complete Guide to the Proper and Economical Erection of Buildings*. It sold for 25 cents, at a time when comparable books cost as much as ten dollars. Palliser was able to lower the cost by including ads from local businesses and by printing it on inexpensive paper. Its low cost, coupled with the wide variety of stylish, low-cost designs it featured, made the book a success, selling all of the 5,000 copies printed.

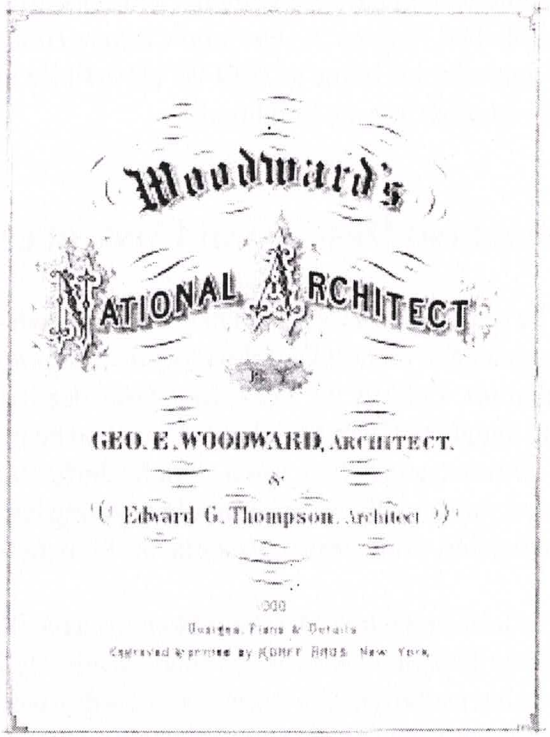
By 1878, George was joined by his brother Charles in "Palliser, Palliser and Co." which became the first large mail-order-plan business. Neither were architects in the modern sense of the word, though George's experience was probably sufficient at the time for him to be recognized as one. The brothers had a clear sense of the urgent need for architectural services throughout the country, as indicated in their enlarged and revised second edition of *Model Homes* (1878).

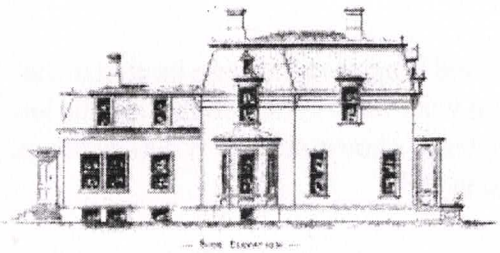
In effect, the Pallisers offered the services of a mail-order architect. Anyone interested in one of their designs filled out a questionnaire addressing such matters as the building site, budget, materials desired, and space needs. Fees for plans ranged from 50 cents (for plans of a relatively modest $3,000 house) to $40 (for a more detailed $7,500 residence).

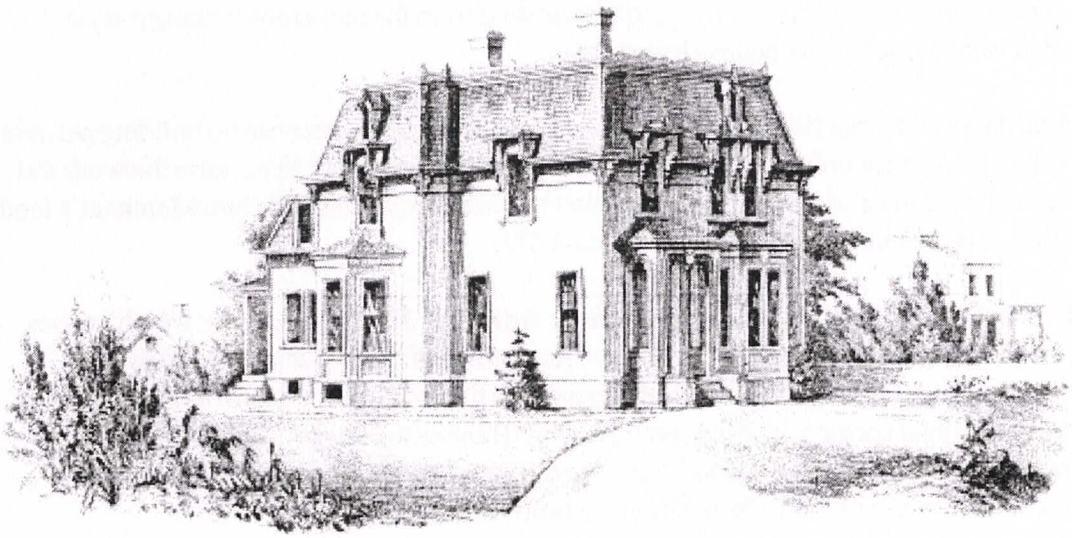
Customers would receive working drawings, including any alterations necessary for their individual needs. A customer could also make arrangements for the company to design a house from scratch, for which the Pallisers charged two percent of the building's cost; by comparison,

Top: New York architect George E. Woodward was one of the most prolific publishers of architectural pattern books and produced books and serials on virtually every building type.

Middle and Bottom: John and Clara Merchant chose Design No. 2 (pictured here) from the architectural pattern book, *Woodward's National Architect* (1869).







most architects of the period charged 3.5 percent. With the Pallisers' plans in hand, the owner would then make arrangements with a local contractor to build the house. In 1878, the brothers published *Palliser's American Cottage Homes*. Design No. 35 was used by Rev. Johan Edgren for his home at 2314 W. 111th Place in the Morgan Park neighborhood and is a designated Chicago Landmark.

Building Design and Construction

The settlement of Grayland in Jefferson Township was subdivided in 1873, but not before its founder and namesake, John Gray deeded portions of his land to his six children and their families. On July 22, 1872, John Gray deeded approximately 13 acres of land to his 31-year-old daughter, Clara Merchant. Clara had been married since 1858 to John Franklin Merchant, a salesman and former town clerk for Jefferson Township. John Merchant is not named on the deed, presumably because should anything happen in the marriage—death or divorce—the land ownership would revert back into the Gray family's assets.

The John and Clara Merchant House is a handsome Second Empire-style house located in the 3800-block of N. Kostner Avenue. Originally located on what was a corner double lot (the lot was later subdivided), it was a stone's throw from John Gray's house at 4362 W. Grace Street. Jefferson Township was annexed to the City of Chicago in 1889.

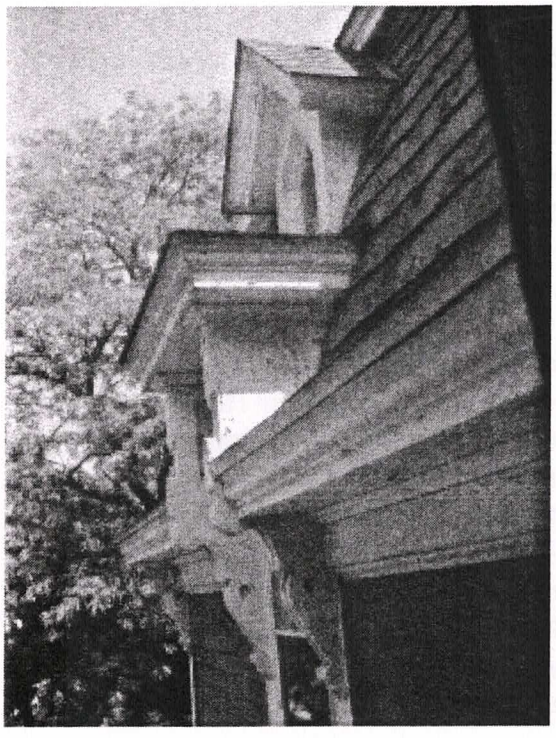
The Merchants needed a substantial-sized house for their growing household. Their first child was born in 1860, but by 1872 there were six surviving children in the family; they had ten children all together. John and Clara Merchant opted to use Design No. 2, a Second Empire-style house featured in the 1869 publication, *Woodward's National Architect*. Considered a distinguished architectural style for the time period, the design would have been ideal for a member of the prominent Gray family, yet differentiated from the numerous Italianate-style homes that were being built in nearby Irving Park.

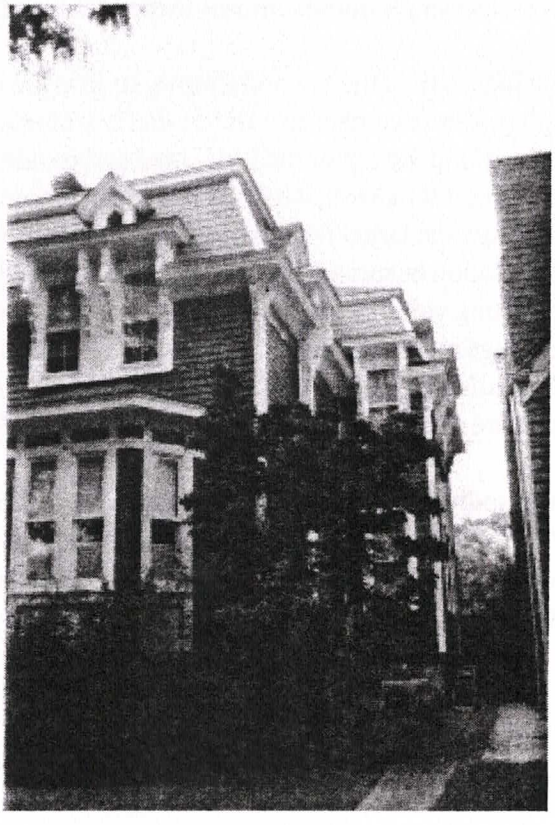
The actual date of construction of the Merchant House is unknown because no building permits exist. When plans were ordered by mail, permits weren't routinely filed because the work did not involve the services of a professional architect. Based on the date of Clara Merchant's land acquisition, it is presumed to have been built ca. 1872.

The Merchant House is a three-story wood-frame structure. The front portion, which houses the main living quarters, is topped with a raised mansard roof. The mansard roof has pronounced dormers and window hoods that penetrate the roof's soffit, interrupting the building's horizontal cornice. The rear portion, which houses the kitchen and former servants' quarters, is two stories with the second story incorporated with a mansard roof. The entire house is clad in clapboard with a foundation of common brick.

The most distinctive features of the house are its flat-lintel window hoods located on the second story on the front and side elevations. Oversized in scale, they have finely-carved and notched

Clockwise from top left: A current view of the Merchant House; John F. Merchant in front of his house, ca. 1900s; Detail showing the house's stepped back mansard rooflines; A detail of the flat-lintel window hood and dormer that interrupts the building's horizontal cornice.





ornament, curvilinear in profile. On top of some of the window hoods rest small dormers, whose windows provide light into the attic. The side elevations have two-story box-shaped bays, and the second floor has its original two-over-two double-hung windows. Other handsome exterior features are the house's paneled double doors, porch and one-story bay window. Some alterations to these features occurred in the mid-20th century but have been restored according to the original 1869 design.

John and Clara Merchant and their seven children lived in the house until about 1879 before moving to Russell, Kansas. They put the house in a trust, but returned in 1886, presumably because Clara's mother (Phoebe Gray) had died. Upon their return, the Merchants began holding religious services in the house, and in 1886 formed the First Baptist Church (later called Irving Park Baptist Church). John Merchant died in the house in 1913 and Clara Merchant, who had later moved from the house, died in 1927.

The Second Empire Architectural Style

The Merchant House is an exceptional example of the Second Empire style. It is named after the reign of French emperor Napoleon III (1852-1870), commonly called the "Second Empire," and is based on a nineteenth-century reinterpretation of seventeenth-century French Baroque architecture. In America, the Second Empire style was seen as a prestigious and stylish European architectural style, worthy of emulation by wealthy American clients with a hunger for European chic. Introduced in the U.S. in the 1850s, the style was especially popular for stylish single-family houses in the 1860s and 70s.

The hallmark of the Second Empire style in the United States is the mansard roof, usually with a high profile, that rises to a flat or shallow pitched deck (such as the Merchant House) and a curb around the top of the roof slope and molded cornices below. Also universal to the style are dormer windows, which may appear both in the mansard roof and walls. Both public buildings and larger houses often include projecting pavilions that are either centrally located on an elevation or serve as a terminating feature in the building's overall composition. The projecting volume is usually ornamented with its own elaborately detailed roof. Window openings may have round arches or flat-headed lintels with lavish hood moldings, also a distinguishing feature on the Merchant House. On the whole, the mass of a Second Empire-style structure appears tall, boldly modulated and sculptural in effect.

Outstanding examples of the style include several stone-fronted row houses in the 100-block of W. Eugenie St. (designated as part of the Old Town Triangle District), as well as the Reginald DeKoven House at Dearborn and Elm streets (part of the Washington Square District Extension).

The Merchant House is an excellent example of the Second Empire architectural style. Other examples of the style include such designated Chicago Landmarks as the DeKoven House (above) at Dearborn and Elm streets (part of the Washington Square District Extension) and the August Dewes House (right) in the 500-block of W. Wrightwood Ave.

Later History

Built ca. 1872, the John and Clara Merchant House experienced a few alterations in its 136-year history. The building's original covered porch (located over the front door) was replaced with a wrap-around porch around the turn of the 20th century. By the 1950s, the porch had been removed and replaced with an uncovered wooden stoop. Also in the 1920s, a small rear addition was built on the house's southwest corner.

In the 1950s the land was subdivided to permit two small brick homes to be built on either side of the house (The Merchant House had been situated in the center of a large double corner lot.) In the process, the south bay was modified to accommodate the new building. The smaller projecting bay window, similar in size and shape to the bay window on the front façade, was removed. Other changes included the replacement of the building's original fish-scale slate roof with cedar shingles and alterations to the doorway and front bay window, a 1960s attempt to give the house a more "Colonial Revival" look.

In 1972, the Merchant House was purchased by James and Elizabeth Reetzke. The Reetzkes worked towards restoring the house to its original 1869 appearance. In 1995 and 2000, respectively, the covered porch and front bay window were restored to their original appearance, based on the drawings in *Woodward's National Architect* (1869) as well as historic photographs.

Criteria for Designation

According to the Municipal Code of Chicago (Sect. 2-120-690), the Commission on Chicago Landmarks has the authority to make a final recommendation of landmark designation for a building, structure, object, or district if the Commission determines it meets two or more of the stated "criteria for landmark designation," as well as possesses a significant degree of its historic design integrity.

The following should be considered by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks in determining whether to recommend that the John and Clara Merchant House be designated as Chicago Landmarks.

Criterion 1: Critical Part of the City's History

Its value as an example of the architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social, or other aspect of the heritage of the City of Chicago, State of Illinois or the United States.

- The John and Clara Merchant House exemplifies the type of residential architecture designs produced through the mail-order pattern book method. It also demonstrates the important role pattern-book house design played in early neighborhood development, in the city's heritage.

- The Merchant House represents the Irving Park neighborhood's early stage of development as one of Chicago's "railroad suburbs" in the 19th century.

Criterion 4: Important Architecture

Its exemplification of an architectural type or style distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship.

- The John and Clara Merchant House is an exceptional example of 19th-century mail-order pattern-book architecture, a design and distribution method popularly used in suburban development.

- The Merchant House is a handsome example of residential architecture in the Second Empire style, an architectural style of great significance in the history of Chicago and the United States. It possesses numerous features distinctive to the style, including its mansard roof, projecting cornices, flat-headed lintels, pronounced, finely-carved cornice brackets and window hood moldings.

- The Merchant house possesses a high quality of design, building materials and excellent craftsmanship.

Integrity Criteria

The integrity of the proposed landmark must be preserved in light of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and ability to express its historic community, architectural or aesthetic interest or value.

The John and Clara Merchant House possesses excellent physical integrity, displayed through its siting, scale, overall design, and historic relationship to the surrounding area. It retains its historic overall exterior form and almost all exterior materials, features and detailing.

Changes to the Merchant House are minor and include the replacement of the original slate roof with cedar shingles and the removal of a projecting bay window on the house's south side. In 1995 and 2000, work was done on the Merchant House to restore its original covered porch and window fenestration on the front bay based on the 1869 design.

Significant Historical and Architectural Features

Whenever a building, structure, object, or district is under consideration for landmark designation, the Commission on Chicago Landmarks is required to identify the "significant historical and architectural features" of the property. This is done to enable the owners and the public to understand which elements are considered most important to preserve the historical and architectural character of the proposed landmark.

Throughout its 136-year history, the Merchant House experienced a few alterations. Top left: The Front Elevation of Design No. 2 from *Woodward's National Architect* (1869). Top right: The original covered porch was replaced with a wooden stoop and the south bay window were removed when the land was subdivided to accomodate new houses in 1954.

Left: A view of the house, ca. 1990. Previous owners gave the front bay and door a "Colonial Revival" look.

Bottom: A current view of the Merchant House, with its porch and bay restored to its original appearance.

Based on its evaluation of the John and Clara Merchant House, the Commission recommends that the significant features be identified as:

- All exterior elevations, including rooflines, of the building.

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Illustrations
From Chamberlin, *Chicago and its Suburbs*: p. 5.
Collection of James and Elizabeth Reetzke: pp. 11 (bottom right), 16.
Commission on Chicago Landmarks: Cover, pp. 2, 4 (top), 11 (top, mid. left), 13.
From Gray, *Genealogy of the Grays of Grayland*: p. 6 (bottom).
Irving Park Historical Society: pp. 6 (top), 11 (top right).
From Posada, "Suburb into Neighborhood: The Transformation of Urban Identity on Chicago's Periphery": p. 6 (middle).
From Woodward, *Woodward's National Architect*: p. 9, 4 (bottom).

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